INTEGRATION, DECENTRALISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

by

Peter Hopcraft

DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 252

INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya

February 1977

This paper was originally prepared for the FAO/SIDA Consultation on policies and Institutions for Integrated Rural Development. It appeared as I.D.S. Working Paper No. 280 in August 1976. Many thanks are due to K. Ewusi and C. Swartz for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

IDS/DP 252

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ABSTRACT

In the light of a number of recent African experiences, and in particular those of the Special Rural Development Programme in Kenya, this paper looks at the issues of integration, decentralisation and implementation in rural development programming.

The issue of integration is found to have economic content where there is complementarity among projects such that an integrated package of projects is more productive than the sum of each of the projects taken individually. Where the programme does not encompass the entire country, and especially where explicitly welfare and human resource development projects are part of the integrated package, the concentration of government activities in programme areas can lead to major inequities in the inter-regional distribution of resources. Finally, while integrating various government and external interventions is important, of far greater importance is the integration of such activities with the activities and capacities of local-level producers and communities.

Decentralisation is seen as the cure to the ills of inadequate localised knowledge in designing programmes, isolation of such programmes from local productive activities and capacities, and a lack of participation by local people. Decentralisation, however, does not necessarily cure these ills. Real power may not be devolved from the bureaucracy and the calibre of local-level bureaucrats may mean that the quality of planning suffers. The character of local participation depends on local power relations and the interests of the poorest strata are unlikely to be adequately represented, so that local inequities may be worsened. While local people are the repository of great expertise concerning their areas, which should be the basis for the development programme, they do not necessarily have all the appropriate information, nor the necessary institutional base, for designing optimal plans for their areas. Detailed knowledge of the local physical and institutional environment and the participation of local people in the development of their areas require that real decision-making must be decentralised, but the problems involved must be recognised and resolved in the process.

Implementation systems for integrated rural development programmes need explicit attention in their design if they are to counteract the tendency for any development programme to grind to a halt. Four administrative innovations are briefly described and evaluated. They are:

1. The local development committee,

2. The area coordinator with explicit responsibility for the whole programme, regardless of the agency involved,

3. The direct grant to be allocated at the local level,

4. The use of simply designed management and monitoring systems to identify bottlenecks and delays and resolve problems.

The jobs and incomes of the vast majority of the population in countries such as Kenya are rural. Even with a high rate of growth of non-rural employment (Kenya is one of those countries where in fact formal wage employment has been growing sporadically, if at all), the current low proportion of the total labour force in such wage employment and the current high rate of growth of the total population ensures that the absolute number of rural people will be expanding inexorably for the foreseeable future. It is unthinkable that this vast and growing rural population should not significantly contribute to economic growth, or that the benefits of growth should pass them by.

Just as the problems of employment and migration or the problems of welfare and income distribution cannot be solved without significant and sustained progress in the rural areas, neither can the problems of preserving a balance of international payments nor, indeed, of sustaining industrial growth. The exports and foreign exchange earnings of most African countries emanate overwhelmingly from their agricultural sectors, and a number of the most important industries have substantial linkages with the rural producer and consumer. The development of other sectors, and the economy as a whole, will be severely constrained and even thwarted without sustained growth and development of the rural and agricultural sector.

Perhaps the most severe long-term economic problem, and one that is placing extreme pressure on rural production systems, is that of burgeoning population growth. There is now considerable consensus on the evidence that it is particularly hard to reduce birth rates despite growing pressures on limited resources, without widespread participation in the processes of economic and social development and widely perceived improvements in standards of living. Again, it is crucial that these changes reach the vast mass of rural people.

The paradox is that despite broad recognition of the importance of rural and agricultural development and numerous policy statements according it the highest priority, country after country is facing severe problems in raising farm productivity and incomes. It is not just Kenya that has difficulty accelerating and maintaining the pace of rural development. Seemingly intractable problems in these areas virtually

characterise the developing countries of the Third World. Bringing development projects to the stage of successful implementation in the rural sector appears to be uniquely difficult: ministries of agriculture seem chronically incapable of productively spending the money allocated to them; there are constant problems with creating and sustaining a local administrative structure that is functional and that relates specific programmes and investments to locally diagnosed constraints and development capacity; and severe distributional problems arise such that government efforts are open to the criticism that they not only fail to reach those who need them most but that the consequence of these efforts is frequently to worsen inequities by subsidising the better off at the expense of the poor. All these problems are easy to recognise but their recognition does not imply a ready solution. Solutions on paper and in the abstract, furthermore, lack credibility until they have been carried to the point of trial and implementation on the ground.

This logic has led to a great deal of experimentation with rural development programming in Africa over the last few years. Some of these programmes have been deliberately experimental, complete with well-conceived efforts to learn from the results, some have been motivated principally by ideological considerations in an effort to mould rural societies into a pre-ordained or desired image, and some have merely been part of a desperate effort to "do something". For a number of these projects there have been specific crop or livestock project objectives; for others the objectives have been multiple, involving a wide range of both income-earning and welfare goals.

More attention has been given lately to the experience of rural development programmes which have already been carried out in Africa. Uma Lele's book, The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa (10), presents an interesting and extremely useful selection of the most significant rural development programmes from a number of African countries. The book also undertakes a well-conceived analysis of the lessons to be drawn from these efforts.

In Kenya, the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) has been the government's principal experimental effort in rural development programming over the last years. A detailed evaluation of SRDP has recently been completed by the Institute for Development Studies. (8)

This short paper will not attempt to summarise either Uma Lele's work or the SRDP Evaluation. It does seem worthwhile however, drawing for the most part on the Kenyan experience, to focus on a number of problems and issues that appear to be of general importance in determining whether rural and agricultural development programmes succeed. Of particular interest will be those programmes that affect smallholders rather than large-scale estates or plantations. This is not because the latter are insignificant in terms of agricultural output, but they present a series of different problems, only marginally related to the development of the existing systems in which the vast majority of African agriculturalists produce, consume and live. The distribution of the benefits and enhanced incomes that result from rural development is now recognised as requiring explicit treatment in planning. Those with the lowest incomes need overt recognition as target groups for efforts to raise productivity and welfare.

Three principal issues will be discussed in this paper: the first is the issue of integration and project complementarity; the second is that of local diagnosis and decentralised planning; and the third is the issue of implementation and the way in which problems and bottlenecks are identified. The SRDP, from which most of the case material in this paper is drawn, illustrates these three issues in operational terms. It represents a serious Kenyan attempt at comprehensive and integrated planning and programming in the six widely varying administrative divisions chosen as SRDP areas. It has as one of its principal features attempted to decentralise the diagnostic and planning process to the local level. As another principal experimental component, it has attempted to develop implementation systems to counteract the apparent tendency for rural projects to grind to a halt, not for reasons of policy or intent but because of unintended administrative blockages and breakdowns.

INTEGRATION AND PROJECT COMPLEMENTARITY

The concept of integration clearly requires some definition. It emanates from the complementarities that are inherent in the rural development process. It involves a recognition that the productivity of particular investments can be enormously enhanced if they are undertaken in an appropriate relationship with complementary investments.

At the technical level an obvious example is dairy development programming. (See Hopcraft et al., 7, and the SRDP Evaluation, 8, chapter 9.) Genetic improvements in cattle can have a negative impact on farm incomes unless they are accompanied by adequate disease control measures to protect the more productive, but frequently more susceptible animals. The same can be true for other cattle management practices. Improved livestock on an unimproved feeding regimen may be less productive than unimproved livestock which are at least tolerant of poor conditions. An integrated dairy development programme would thus include genetic improvements, disease control and measures to improve management and feeding practices, as well as attention to the marketing and pricing structures for dairy products. In Western Kenya, measures to introduce improved breeds of dairy cattle without adequate disease control or management improvement have certainly worsened the lot of a good many farmers. Where loans were involved for the purchase of improved diary cows that subsequently died, the result has been farmer indebtedness without the income base to repay the debt.

Fundamentally, the question is one of an adequate definition of a "project". In the above case, one aspect of the necessary programme to raise dairy productivity, without the complementary aspects, does not embody an adequate definition. In a situation where cattle are dying of disease a disease control project is likely to be justified, but the pay-off for such a project depends on the productivity of the cattle saved from disease. Integration requires that the whole spectrum of possible constraints on the sector be considered, and a package of projects, any one of which may not be justified on its own, may be more than justified when considered together.

When it comes to the introduction of a new crop, again the genetic materials, the plant nutrients and the weed or pest control are technical complements: the absence of any one may drastically reduce productivity. Farmer knowledge levels, transporting and marketing facilities, and a number of other possible constraints on the particular crop project dictate that the project must integrate a programme that ensures that an ignored constraint does not become binding.

To carry the logic a step further, the justification for a road construction project must be sought in the traffic it will carry, the transport cost savings that are attributable to the road and the stimulating effects of reduced transport costs on the economy. A road may be well constructed and have considerable traffic-bearing capacity, but its payoff ex post depends not on the road itself, but on other economic activities that have transport implications. A road project may be more than justified if it is related to a whole package of other investments and developments in a particular area; it may be totally unjustified without them. It is a case where interrelated investments and institutional developments, both farm and non-farm, are likely to be justifiable in economic terms while any of the individual measures in isolation is not. Integration among investments in directly productive activities (e.g. crops and livestock) and physical and institutional infrastructure (e.g. roads, marketing systems, disease control and farmer educative services) raises the productivity of each individual investment to the point where each is justified.

The question is: where does one stop in justifying the inclusion of additional projects in an integrated rural development programme? The logic developed so far is completely consistent with normal criteria used in the social analysis of investments. The benefits attributable to the marginal project may in large measure result from increasing the productivity of other projects, but as long as the costs are at least justified by these benefits the project should be included. The crucial step is that of identifying the inter-relationships between projects so that the additional benefits that accrue as a result of the interactions are considered in deciding on the package. This logic for integrating a series of projects is straightforward (though incredibly widely violated). It indicates, for instance, that in a dairy development package of improved cows, improved farmer knowledge, disease control and dairy marketing facilities, very high returns, indicating a misallocation of resources, are available from investment in one of these areas if that area has been relatively ignored. While the logic is clear, it does not imply that the task is easy. Projects have different time horizons and, particularly when human resource development projects are included, different welfare implications.

Even more difficult issues are raised when additional projects which have little or no complementarity with the other projects in the local package are also considered in an "integrated" programme. Inevitably, the thorny issue of the interregional distribution of resources and incomes is raised. While it would be possible to make a case that rural industries, for instance, have supply and demand linkages with other rural producers and consumers and should therefore go where other rural developments are also underway, the inevitable consequence is increasing disparities among regions. Real growth/equity tradeoffs thus exist. In the case of welfare-oriented projects such as those concerned with nutrition and health, they should presumably be allocated to where the need is greatest rather than to where other programmes are being carried out. (While improved nutrition and better health can undoubtedly increase the productivity of labour on, for example, labour-intensive public works projects, they can also have this effect for a farmer working on his own farm, and it is not clear why the former should be more important than the latter.) This is not to say that projects oriented specifically toward welfare goals are not legitimate parts of a rural development effort. Bruce Johnston and Anthony Meyer have argued cogently that a composite package of health, nutrition and family planning does belong in an integrated rural development programme. (9) Partly this is because such a package tends to improve the welfare of the very poorest, who are frequently excluded from the benefits of programmes purely aimed at raising productivity. Another reason is that measures to reduce birth rates are perhaps the most important of all in any serious effort to increase incomes and welfare, and such measures tend to be far more effective in the context of a "composite package".

The distributional issue must be faced squarely if, as is almost inevitably the case at this stage, the integrated rural development programme does not encompass the whole country. It has obvious implications for equity and welfare in that income-earning opportunities created by the programme are inevitably concentrated in the areas selected. This concentration is compounded by locating both infrastractural and welfare programmes and investments in the same areas.

This inter-regional distributional question became a political issue in SRDP. It was hard to convince those from outside the SRDP areas that the integrated development programme was purely experimental and that the experiment required that the development and welfare programmes exclude their areas. From an allocative, as well as an equity point of view, it is possible for returns to particular investments to be driven down by overconcentration on particular areas. There were certainly cases where non-SRDP areas were starved for funds while the opposite problem, that of how to use up allocated money by a budgetary deadline, was plaguing SRDP areas. With the more comprehensive district development planning initiatives of the Kenya Government that are taking up where SRDP left off, these inter-regional issues must be given explicit treatment.

The allocative issue of where economic resources have the highest payoff at the margin and the distributional issue of how the benefits are distributed among individuals and among regions require a national, rather than a local perspective.[1] The danger of having a development programme defined in local rather than national terms, especially where the agency responsible has separate funding and substantial power at the centre but is exclusively interested in the success of its own programme, is that both distributional and allocative issues are ignored beyond the boundaries of the programme's geographical domain. This was certainly the case (deliberately so for experimental reasons) in the SRDP areas. Provincial staff were supposed to treat SRDP areas on a par with all other areas in their provinces with regard to ongoing programmes and were discouraged from a natural tendency to concentrate non-SRDP resources in other than SRDP areas as a form of compensation. Ultimately, the constraint on generalising the integrated approach of the SRDP to the country as a whole is budgetary. The general allocation issue must be viewed in the light of overall resource constraints, productive opportunities and welfare needs. Local planning of the SRDP type then merges with national planning.

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1. In theory these two issues merge with a clearly defined social welfare function, but it is precisely the lack of a clear definition of the tradeoffs involved (growth versus equity, higher incomes now versus higher incomes later, improved incomes and welfare in one region versus improved incomes and welfare in another) that creates the problem.

Perhaps the extreme case of concentrating expenditures in a particular area of integrated rural development is the Lilongwe Land Development Programme in Malawi. Uma Lele asks:-

> Why should the people of Lilongwe benefit from substantial productive services, intensive land use planning, roads, soil conservation measures, water supply, and health clinics, while several other regions of Malawi do not receive even the minimum level of agricultural services? (10)

There is little doubt that even by the most conventional productivity criteria (i.e., excluding equity considerations) resources could have been better used in a less concentrated investment pattern. If so, the pursuit of integration has led to both lower growth and a less equitable distribution than would otherwise have been possible.

Perhaps the principal fallacy with regard to integrated rural development programming is that the main issue is one of integrating a number of different government interventions with each other, rather than integrating all government or external intervention with what is and will be going on among the farmers and rural communities themselves. Coordination between different arms and ministries of government is clearly a good thing in defining packages of investment projects, but governments tend towards the illusion that the most important activities in the rural areas are their own. When it comes to building a road, for instance, government planners think more readily of locating it in relationship to some government project, even a relatively insignificant one in terms of traffic and transport cost savings, rather than of locating it where some indigenous local productive activity is developing or could develop, even in the absence of government activity. Integration of this latter sort requires not merely coordination of government programmes, it requires local diagnosis and analysis of the contraints and the potential of a particular local area and the tailoring of local programmes in such a way that existing institutions and productive systems are complemented and enhanced.

LOCAL DIAGNOSIS AND DECENTRALISATION

In this section the logic and the need for decentralisation will be examined. The major problems and conflicts that have emerged in practice, particularly the problems of developing good local diagnostic and planning ability and of devolving real decision-making power to the local level, will then be raised.

In view of the elemental fact that farming depends on the physical, human and technological capacity that exists at the local level, the extent to which local potential and local constraints are ignored in rural development programming is constantly astounding. Few industries are as dependent as agriculture on the physical and ecological environment. It should be unnecessary to stress that physical feasibility in terms of soils, terrain, water and the general climatic pattern cannot be generalised from one specific location to another. Ignoring or not having enough local detail about the physical and biological environment is a certain prescription for disaster.

A related aspect of determining production possibilities in a given area, and one that is often ignored at enormous cost by physical scientists, is what might be called the institutional environment. This includes the nature and structure of the farming systems in an area, farm sizes, tenure patterns and access to land and other resources; it includes such factors as level of commercialisation, farmers' attitudes and knowledge levels; it also includes questions of the existence and level of government and commercial off-farm services such as research, extension, disease control and financial institutions. With the exception of certain physical or climatic features, knowledge of the characteristics of an area do not necessarily imply that they are immutable. Soil fertility can be enhanced; farmers' knowledge and skill levels and even culturally embedded attitudes can undergo major changes; road systems and marketing structures can be developed. But the fact that these characteristics can be altered does not mean that they can be ignored. The whole process of rural development is, to a considerable extent, the process of introducing feasible changes in the physical, biological and institutional environment. But this is a process that requires a detailed local knowledge of the existing situation and of the potential of the area.

Another dairy cattle project in the Western part of Kenya will serve as an illustration. The area has undoubted ecological potential for dairy production and there is a good market for milk both locally and in a nearby large town. A government farm was thus established to act as a demonstration unit and as a source of high-grade dairy cows. This farm is run by government employees on the lines of a large commercial farm, except that it is not required to, nor does it, cover its costs.

It is stocked with a potentially very productive, imported breed of dairy cow, a breed that requires intensive and highly skilled management in terms of both feeding and disease control. Local Ministry of Agriculture staff make efforts to promote sales of cows (at high, but still heavily subsidised, prices) to farmers in the area.

The principal problems are two-fold. First, the farmers in the area have had little or no experience with the management of high-grade exotic stock. The second problem is that disease, and particularly tick-borne disease to which the imported cows are particularly susceptible, has not been brought under control in the area. The result is that at the time of this writer's visit to the area, 80 per cent of the cows that had been sold to local smallholders had died, frequently within a few weeks of having been purchased by the farmer. The financial and the psychological setback to the new owners resulting from these deaths has been considerable. Since they were purchased at subsidised prices, the cost to the economy of the livestock losses was even greater than the private costs. The efforts to create "model dairy farms" in the area to counteract these losses has involved channelling excessive funds to a few farmers (inevitably those who are already better off), with minimal impact beyond the boundaries of the chosen farms.

Still in the livestock area, a group ranch was established in North-west Kenya. The "feasibility study" for this project showed no understanding of either the ecological or the social constraints on the development of the production system. Stocking rates and offtake rates were taken from some textbook guideline with no reference to the social preferences or management practices of the local pastoralists. Government programmes of water supply and disease control were then introduced which, under the circumstances, could only lead to a worsening of the chronic overstocking with domestic livestock. This pattern is already destroying the grass cover, leading to massive soil erosion, and undermining the environmental base for maintaining animal life and human welfare in the area. It is a case of a government programme leading to desert creation.

In both of these cases the physical, biological and social constraints at the local level were not adequately considered or analysed. The questions must now be raised as to whether this lack of local information and analysis is a result of inadequate decentralisation and whether

greater decentralisation of the planning process would improve the situation?

Two interrelated aspects of decentralisation emerge in practice as problems. The first is the question of the devolution of real decision-making and expenditure power to the local level. The second is the adequacy of the institutional base at the local level to which power can be devolved. To restate, first of all does Government really want to decentralise, does it want the political and allocative implications of local participation? Secondly, is local participation going to improve or worsen the performance of rural planning and of project selection, design and implementation? The inter-relatedness of these two questions is obvious. Even if a genuine political commitment exists to decentralise power and enlist local participation, harsh questions must be asked about the allocative implications of doing so. Of particular importance here is the relative priority given to directly productive, income-earning projects, longer-term infrastructural investment projects, and projects and expenditure designed for more immediate welfare and consumption goals.

Decentralisation does not necessarily involve increasing the participation of local people nor increasing the equity with which resources are distributed. A process of decentralising a bureaucracy does not necessarily shift power from that bureaucracy - perhaps the reverse. In the Tanzania case there is little doubt that, at least in the early stages of the decentralisation effort, the process involved more rigourous imposition of central government notions on local people than the opposite. In other cases, decentralisation devolves power to local elites who use it to further their own political or financial goals at the expense of more broadly conceived income or welfare goals in the area.

The point being made is not merely a populist one (though the mistrust or inhibition of popular participation is frequently inappropriate); it is that real conflicts may develop between the needs and priorities of an area as conceived by a "rational planner" on the one hand and by local people on the other. Pastoralists on heavily overgrazed land are a case in point. To meet their pressing demand for milk they conceive of their needs as being for more livestock. They therefore want more water points and disease control measures to enable them to expand domestic

livestock numbers. The preservation of their livelihood on the other hand requires managing the range resources and maintaining an adequate grass cover on the land. Where overgrazing is the problem, this involves the drastic reduction or even removal of domestic stock. Destocking measures however, given current institutional arrangements and incentive patterns, are not likely to be part of a programme initiated by local people in these areas.

In general, local people may not have the necessary technical and economic information to know the productivity and welfare tradeoffs that confront them. Also local institutions may be such that individuals do not have the incentive to behave in a fashion that is consistent with, let alone maximises, the social interest. With a common property resource such as communally held land, for instance, the group's interest is one of husbanding the land to maintain or enhance its productivity in future years, whereas the individual's interest is to overtax the land for grazing in the present period because he himself may not be the beneficiary of its future productivity.

The enormous pressure that tends to be exerted at the local level to expand education, especially formal education, is a case of inaccurate or outdated economic information being used to generate investment programmes. Despite the fact that the economic returns to formal schooling have been driven down by the expansion of the school system, parents tend to view schooling, especially subsidised schooling, as the best investment they can make. The result is that where allocative decisions really reflect local preferences, schools tend to be expanded to the point where the economic returns to the marginal investment are extremely low and even negative. (See Hopcraft, 5 and 6.)

None of the above implies that centrally initiated or bureaucratically controlled planning systems are immune to the allegation of misallocation, from either the productive or the distributive point of view. To return to a major theme of this paper, government officers tend to view development in terms of government schemes, frequently conceived in isolation from local political processes or local production systems. Government activity that complements local capacities and mobilises latent local energies is likely to yield far greater returns. Such integration

between the activities of government and the activities of local producers and local communities is undoubtedly more likely where there is genuine local participation in the planning process.

The case of labour-intensive road construction in one of the SRDP areas will illustrate. (See SRDP report, chapter 12.) Initially the planning and siting of the roads were undertaken by a government engineer using topographical and engineering criteria and with little or no reference to the local polity. The technical task was above reproach, but there were severe difficulties with local participation. The local assumption was that the roads were yet another government activity whose progress was, at best, to be watched with mild interest and, at worst, to be treated as an external imposition.

Following something of a political crisis relating to the roads programme, the initial scheme was scrapped and planning proceeded through a process that involved real participation at the locational and sub-locational level. Siting and right-of-away issues were left to local people and the enthusiasm that was generated for the roads enabled the planners not only to acquire right of way, but to enlist voluntary labour for the initial land clearing. When it came to enlisting workers for the construction of the road, a wage of Kshs 5.00 (US $0.55) per day was offered for casual labourers. The only recruitment problem faced was that of too many applicants and lottery systems had to be developed to determine which of the applicants were to be given the work.[2] The final siting of the roads was not very different from that originally proposed by the government engineer, but the implications of the process for both the participation and mobilisation of local people were substantially different.

IMPLEMENTATION

This paper has discussed some of the problems of the content of rural development programmes and some of the mechanisms by which choices are made. It is now increasingly recognised that some of the most severe

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2. The Institute for Development Studies recommended that this wage be reduced, firstly so that those workers with the lowest opportunity cost in agricultural and other pursuits would take the work; secondly, so that the wage bill would be distributed more equitably; and thirdly, to maximise the amount of road constructed from a given budget. This recommendation was not followed, and wages were in fact raised to substantially above local agricultural wage levels.

inadequacies of rural projects and development programmes pertain to the delivery system and its capacity to sustain momentum, resolve problems, and keep planned activities and expenditures on track.

If implementation is a problem for single ministries or agencies, it is more so when multi-sectoral, multi-agency, integrated programmes are involved. Operational responsibilities tend to be allocated strictly down agency lines and there are seldom local-level personnel with adequate power outside their own agency who are concerned with the operation of the programme.

An experimental development administration system was devised as part of the SRDP, designed to tackle some of the problems of implementation as well as the issues of integration and decentralisation. The system was described and evaluated in some detail elsewhere. (See David, 4, Chambers, 3, and Chapter 19 of the SRDP report, 8.) Martin David lists a number of administrative innovations that have been significant in improving the rural development delivery system. Four such innovations will be referred to here: 1) the project committee, 2) the area coordinator, 3) direct grants, and 4) the role of management and monitoring systems.

The project committee consists of the functionaries of each of the central government operating agencies in the area and a variety of local political and administrative representatives. Some of these representatives were chosen through an electoral process (which, depending on the nature of the local political system, may or may not make them good spokesmen for local felt needs), and some derive their legitimacy from other sources (e.g. chiefs and traditional leaders). The committees' functions include coordinating the programmes of different government agencies, relating these programmes to local needs and potentials, providing the main channel for local participation in the allocative process, and monitoring the implementation of planned projects.

The performance of project committees has been highly variable. In some areas they have been run entirely by government personnel with minimal local participation. Efforts to co-opt local leaders without giving them decision-making power have generally not been successful, but questions about the political legitimacy of these leaders and about the wisdom of the allocative or management decisions that they make have reinforced the reluctance of government bureaucrats to have real power slip from their hands. In other areas there has undoubtedly been genuine popular

participation in decision making, reflecting real local debate. Where this has happened, it has not only led to a better integration of the government programme with indigenous farm and community activities, but it has also resulted in improved local information about government activities, more willing mobilisation for self-help projects, and improved participation by local producers and others in government initiated schemes.

The position of SRDP Area Coordinator (AC) was established in response to the need to have an effective executive at the local level with responsibilities for the whole integrated programme, regardless of the agency involved. The AC is the model for the District Development Officer in the Kenya Government's District Development Planning initiative. He convenes the Project Committee, supplies members with necessary information, and is responsible for the planning, the coordination and the implementation of the integrated programme. His appointment is with the Ministry of Finance and Planning but his responsibilities involve the complete range of operating ministries (agriculture, works, commerce and industry, health, education, etc.). He not only deals with the local staff of these ministries, but, as the need arises, with the central offices as well. A system of "link-men" exists at the headquarters of each of the operating ministries to form the AC's primary contacts. These link-men are senior officers whose principal task is to solve problems when they arise and to overcome unnecessary bureaucratic impediments. When the ACs posted to local areas have been of adequate competence, when they have been given sufficient bureaucratic support, and when they have been allowed to remain in their areas long enough to develop real expertise, they have made a very major contribution to the effectiveness of integrated programmes. The degree to which these conditions are fulfilled is, in fact, a good indication of the seriousness with which government is undertaking the rural development task.

The use of direct grants to be administered by the Area Coordinator on behalf of the local development committee has proved extremely useful in breaking bottlenecks created by funding procedures along strictly ministerial lines. The use of matching grants in a number of different projects has also been particularly useful in mobilising local resources and local enthusiasm. These frequently take the form of local labour being contributed while the materials and the design skills are paid for from outside.

The experience with management and monitoring systems has been somewhat variable. (See SRDP report, 8, and Belshaw and Chambers, 1 and 2.) Such systems require a thorough understanding by the staff involved and must be kept up-to-date if they are to be useful. It is therefore essential that they be uncomplicated and not overly time-consuming. It is also essential that they be a functioning part of a determined and continuous effort to break bottlenecks and resolve problems that arise, rather than becoming an end in themselves.

Two such systems have been developed and tested in the SRDP areas. The first is the Project Implementation and Management System (PIM), a series of reports and bar charts that provide to both local staff and central ministries a regular systematic review of the programme and an early warning of impending or actual bottlenecks.

In some areas PIM is regarded as the most significant of the SRDP innovations; it is at the very centre of the management operation and has undoubtedly made an enormous difference to the success rate in implementing an integrated series of projects. It is fundamentally a tool in the hands of the Area Coordinator and its value depends on his insistence on maintaining it and the use he makes of it. In other areas the system is not kept up-to-date and has degenerated to an additional bureaucratic task added to the pile of "pending" paper-work.

The Field Staff Management System (FSMS) is the second management tool which has been developed as part of the SRDP. It involves procedures for training extension agents, involving them in programming, monitoring their activities, and evaluating the results. The experience with FSMS is similar to that with PIM. It can degenerate to an overlay of additional bureaucratic activities as an end in itself, or it can become the centre of an extension service with markedly improved management and performance. The simplicity of the system and the ease with which it can be kept functional are clearly crucial to its performance, but above all it should only be introduced when there is a clear commitment to its use and clear understanding of its rationale and the procedures involved.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The twin imperatives of raising the productivity of the African economies and improving the welfare of the poorest people both imply that the performance of rural development programming must be radically improved.

A great deal of experimentation has gone on in this area and important insights have been gained. This paper has looked at three principal issues in the light of recent experience, particularly the experience of the Special Rural Development Programme in Kenya.

The first is that of integration. Some investments are technical complements and must be undertaken in an integrated fashion. The social returns to complementary projects undertaken jointly can be a great deal higher than when those projects are undertaken in isolation. Improved livestock without improved disease control has, for example, increased cattle mortality in some areas, undermining the returns to investments aimed at the genetic improvement of the livestock. This logic can be stretched to justify a range of different projects being introduced into a given area to take advantage of a new road, for instance, which will in turn be justified by the other simultaneous investments.

The problem of inter-regional allocation arises when the logic of "integration" is used to concentrate resources in particular regions to the exclusion of others. Distributional issues especially arise when specifically welfare oriented projects or human resource development projects are located where integrated programmes are being undertaken, rather than being distributed on the basis of need. In the extreme, the pursuit of integration leads to both lower growth and less equitable income distribution than is possible with an alternative allocation of resources.

The major fallacy with regard to integration is that the main task is one of integrating or coordinating the government programme. In fact the main task is that of integrating any government or external intervention with what is going on among farmers and rural communities themselves.

The second principal issue is that of decentralisation. Rural development planning that is undertaken without detailed knowledge of the local physical, social and institutional environment, without reference to local capacities, constraints and experience, and without the participation of local people creates problems to which decentralisation would appear to be the answer. Decentralisation does not, however, necessarily resolve these problems. It may not shift power from the government bureaucracy, and, where it does, the groups to which power is devolved may not

be representative, especially of the poorer strata of society. Local people, furthermore, may not have the information, incentives or local political structures necessary for well conceived local planning and investment decision making.

Government schemes are frequently conceived in isolation from local political processes and local production systems. Government activity that complements local capacities and mobilises latent local energies tends to yield far higher returns. Such integration between the activities of government and the activities of local producers and local communities is a great deal more likely where there is real local participation in the planning process.

The third issue is particularly crucial given the lags, delays and bottlenecks that seem to plague rural development programmes; it is that of implementation. This can be a particular problem where several ministries or agencies are involved in an integrated programme. Four administrative innovations are described as having been particularly useful in this regard.

The first is the development or project committee which is a forum for a variety of government officers and local leaders to meet, elicit views and make decisions. The second is the Area Coordinator, a government officer whose responsibilities involve the whole integrated programme, its planning and implementation. The third is the direct grant that puts some expenditure power in the hands of local planning authorities This can be used to break bottlenecks that can otherwise cause major delays. The fourth is the use of management and monitoring systems that systematically set goals and targets and identify the places where delays are occurring and problems are arising. It is necessary that such systems be kept simple and that they be tied into a determined and continued effort to resolve problems that arise.

There is now little doubt that neither the economic growth objectives nor the human welfare objectives of countries such as Kenya can be attained without drastic improvements in rural development. These improvements will only come by trial and frequently by error. It is extremely important that the process be accompanied by well-conceived analysis so that we learn from both our failures and our suceesses.

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